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The Connaught Rangers

*I understand from Mr O'Sullivan
that the ~~the~~ original of
these four documents were given to the
Taoiseach by Mr External Affairs
yesterday. M/ 30/10/70*

1. It was decided by the Government several months ago that the remains of James Daly, James Smythe and Peter Sears would be repatriated at Government expense from India and reburied in Ireland. The National Graves Association (NGA) obtained written permission from the next of kin in all three cases to look after the arrangements which they have been doing in consultation with the Department of External Affairs. The remains will be received tomorrow (30th October) at Dublin Airport by the NGA and taken to Adam and Eve Church, Merchants Quay. On following day the remains of Smythe and Sears will be re-interred at Glasnevin Cemetery whilst the remains of Daly will be taken to the Church in Tyrrellspass for reinterment next day (1st November) in his mother's grave. It was decided that the funerals would be civil and without State representation.
2. I learned some days ago from the Secretary of the NGA that he was having difficulties with a Mr. Michael F. Kearney who lives in London and claims to be Hon. Sec. of "The Connaught Rangers Mutineers Association" founded about 40 years ago. Apparently Kearney was disappointed that he was not involved in the repatriation and funeral arrangements. On learning that no firing party would be present he threatened to stir up trouble and make his own arrangements to rectify this deficiency. The NGA regarded this as a threat to involve illegal organisations and I immediately informed the Department of Justice of this threat. It has now come to light that Kearney wrote to the Army seeking facilities for a firing party but the Department of Defence is going to turn down the request. (In 1949 the Army did provide Kearney and the Dublin Brigade of the Old IRA, Pearse St. with rifles, blank ammunition and Trumpeters [In 1949] when the Connaught Rangers Memorial was being unveiled).
3. Recent developments, particularly the firing of shots outside the GPO when the funeral of Liam Walsh (Saor Éire) was passing, have made the Department of Justice very cautious. I understand that the Minister for Justice and the Taoiseach have discussed the ~~question~~ ^{possibility} of involving the Army at the funerals and firing volleys over the graves, if necessary.
4. Notes are attached on the extent of Government involvement in previous repatriation and reburial cases - Barnes/McCormick and Dunn/O'Sullivan. It will be seen that in the latter case the Taoiseach and the President were represented by their ADC's. There was no official representation in the other case.
5. A strong presence of Gardaí and detectives at such funerals is no guarantee against incidents, though in the ~~present~~ ^{recent} case of Liam Walsh it was probably a deterrent against the firing of a volley over the grave, although shots were fired outside the G.P.O. There is no guarantee, either, that the presence of an Army contingent would rule out the possibility of incidents in the course of the funeral procession and indeed at the cemetery.
6. R T E has announced that it is doing a special "7 Days" programme on the Connaught Rangers tomorrow night. Senator Keegan was the first to draw the Department's attention to this.
7. *An immediate decision is required as to whether the Army should be involved or whether there should be alternative representation of the Government. The Minister may wish to discuss the matter urgently with the Taoiseach and the Ministers for Justice and Defence.*
Department of External Affairs

29th October 1970